DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 299 410 CE 051 026

TITLE	Army Training. Need To Strengthen Internal Controls over Troop Schools. Report to the Honorable John O. Marsh, Jr., the Secretary of the Army.
INSTITUTION	General Accounting Office, Washington, DC. Div. of National Security and International Affairs.
REPORT NO	GAO/NSIAD-88-208
PUB DATE	Aug 88
NOTE	45p.
AVAILABLE FROM	U.S. General Accounting Office, P.O. Box 6015, Gaithersburg, MD 20877 (first five copies free; additional copies $2.00 each; 100 or more: 25% discount).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Military Schools; *Military Training; Postsecondary Education; *Private Schools; *Program Administration; Program Costs; *Program Effectiveness; *Program Improvement; Proprietary Schools
IDENTIFIERS	*Army

ABSTRACT

The General Accounting Office (GAO) conducted a review to determine whether the Army effectively managed training programs conducted by outside contractors. During the review, the GAO evaluated six of the courses most commonly taught by outside contractors, examined procedures, interviewed Army officials, and visited the schools at six installations. The GAO found that the Army has not established effective internal controls to ensure that troop school funds are spent prudently and that contractors provide training that is consistent with Army standards and doctrine. Some of the specific findings were as follows: (1) programs were justified on the basis of past usage rather than need; (2) an excessive number of soldiers might have been trained; (3) some contracted courses were not authorized by Army regulation or duplicated courses taught elsewhere in the Army; (4) some courses were inconsistent with Army training standards and contained outdated doctrine; (5) the Army lacked criteria to determine cross-training requirements; and (6) course monitoring and evaluation efforts were minimal. The GAO recommended that the Army develop guidelines that commanders should consider in conducting needs assessments, develop standardized criteria for using and evaluating the schools, and develop and implement internal controls over the programs. (KC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Report to the Honorable John O. Marsh, Jr., the Secretary of the Army

August 1988

ARMY TRAINING

Need to Strengthen Internal Controls Over Troop Schools

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

GAO

United States
General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

National Security and
International Affairs Division

B-222994

August 4, 1988

The Honorable John O. Marsh, Jr.
The Secretary of the Army

Dear Mr. Secretary:

This report discusses the training of soldiers in Army troop schools operated by private contractors.

The report contains recommendations to you concerning the need to ensure that troop school funds are spent prudently and that contractors provide training that is consistent with Army standards and doctrine. As you know, 31 U.S.C. 720 requires the head of a federal agency to submit a written statement on actions taken on our recommendations to the House Committee on Government Operations and the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs not later than 60 days after the date of the report. A written statement must also be submitted to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations with an agency's first request for appropriations made more than 60 days after the date of the report.

We are sending copies of this report to the Chairmen of the above Committees; the Chairmen, House and Senate Committees on Armed Services; the Secretary of Defense; and the Director, Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely yours,

Frank C. Conahan
Assistant Comptroller General

Executive Summary

Purpose

Highly trained soldiers represent the cornerstone of Army units' ability to fight and win on the battlefield. Consequently, the Army devotes considerable resources to training soldiers. While first-line supervisors are usually responsible for training soldiers assigned to their units, Army installations also contract with private colleges to train soldiers.

The Army does not keep overall data on the number of soldiers trained by contractors. However, at one major Army command, contractors trained more than 236,000 soldiers during fiscal years 1986 and 1987. GAO conducted this review to determine whether the Army effectively managed training programs conducted by contractors.

Background

Training given to soldiers when they first join the Army consists of basic training and advanced individual training conducted by Army schools and training centers. This training prepares soldiers to reach the apprentice level in one of the Army's more than 350 job specialties. After completion of initial training, soldiers are assigned to Army units where first-line supervisors provide training in additional tasks, enabling soldiers to progress from the apprentice to the journeyman level in their job specialties.

Army commanders are also authorized to use local "troop schools" to provide job training. "Troop schools" have been established at most major Army installations and are generally operated by private colleges under contract arrangements. The Army does not centrally manage troop schools. Rather, each installation contracts for courses and manages its own program. The Army does not keep data on the total cost of troop schools. However, about $12.5 million was paid to contractors over a 2-year period at the two major Army commands GAO visited.

Results in Brief

The Army has not established effective internal controls to ensure that troop school funds are spent prudently and that contractors provide training that is consistent with Army standards and doctrine. GAO found that

- programs were justified on the basis of past usage rather than need,
- an excessive number of soldiers might have been trained,
- some contracted courses were not authorized by Army regulation or duplicated courses taught elsewhere in the Army, and
- some courses were inconsistent with Army training standards and contained outdated doctrine.

Principal Findings

Adequate Needs Assessments Were Not Conducted

None of the installations GAO visited had conducted adequate needs assessments or considered training alternatives, as required by Army regulation, before contracting for courses. Consequently, the Army had not determined whether contracted courses were required or how many soldiers should attend them. The troop school program has become self-perpetuating since it is based on past usage rather than an assessment of training need. At one installation, units were required to enroll soldiers in classes so that all contracted training spaces were filled.

Certification Programs May Overstate Training Requirement

Many installations have established certification programs to test the proficiency of soldiers working in certain duty positions. These programs require soldiers to take certification examinations developed by the contractors who teach troop school courses. At some installations, failure of the examination means automatic enrollment in a course. Effective internal control is needed to ensure that contractors do not use this process to create a false demand for courses. However, none of the installations GAO visited had implemented review procedures or controls to ensure that the tests met Army standards or adequately measured soldier proficiency. Aside from the impact that certification testing may have on troop school enrollment, the need to contract for certification test development appears questionable in view of the Army's annual program that evaluates soldiers' proficiency based on tests covering critical military occupational specialty tasks.

Army Lacks Criteria to Determine Cross-Training Requirements

Most soldiers who attended troop schools received training in occupations that differed from their primary occupational specialties. This training, referred to as cross-training, is given to enable soldiers to fill in for regularly assigned soldiers who are absent from the unit. The Army has not established criteria to guide commanders in deciding how much backup expertise is necessary. While installation officials did not know how many soldiers had been cross-trained, GAO's analysis showed that at one installation as many as five soldiers were cross-trained for each authorized position in one occupational specialty.

Many Courses Were Not Authorized

According to the Army regulations, troop schools should not provide tactical or combat-related training or substantially duplicate training offered elsewhere by Army personnel. GAO found, however, that troop schools taught tactical courses such as Basic Marksmanship and M60 Machine Gunner. The schools also taught leadership courses that duplicated courses taught by Army personnel. More than 35,000 soldiers attended these types of courses in fiscal years 1986 and 1987 at the two major Army commands GAO visited.

Programs of Instruction Were Inconsistent With Training Standards and Doctrine

Troop school officials in many cases did not submit course programs of instruction to the Army's training schools for review and approval. Consequently, course content varied considerably from base to base and was inconsistent with Army training standards. The courses also contained outdated Army doctrine.

Course Monitoring and Evaluation Efforts Were Minimal

Course monitoring and evaluation are important internal control elements. Although troop school programs have been conducted for many years, the Army has not developed guidance on how commanders and other officials should monitor and evaluate courses. Installation officials essentially performed only minimal monitoring of contractor activity. None of the installations GAO visited had conducted formal evaluations. Installations limited their evaluations to individual student course critiques and class inspections. While such information could provide the framework for an effective evaluation, the critiques were not analyzed on an aggregate basis, nor was there any follow-up of reported problem areas.

Recommendations

GAO recommends that the Secretary of the Army take the following actions:

- Develop guidance on factors commanders should consider in conducting needs assessments.
- Develop standardized criteria for (1) determining the number of soldiers who should be cross- trained, (2) establishing entrance qualifications for course enrollment, and (3) evaluating program effectiveness.
- Develop and implement internal control procedures to ensure that (1) adequate needs assessments are conducted before installations contract for training and (2) programs are properly monitored and evaluated.

- Determine whether soldier certification should be continued. If certification is necessary, develop standardized tests for use in all troop schools.
- Ensure that course programs of instruction currently used in troop schools are reviewed and approved by the Army's training schools.
- Direct the Army's training schools to develop standardized programs of instruction as new requirements for troop school courses are identified.

Agency Comments

The Department of Defense agreed with GAO's findings and recommendations and stated that troop schools will receive intense Army scrutiny to ensure the effective and efficient use of limited training resources. In addition, because the Army lacks the internal controls needed to ensure that the troop school program is properly administered, it will consider including this deficiency in the Secretary of the Army's fiscal year 1988 Annual Assurance Statement that is prepared in accordance with the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982 (Public Law 97-255). (See app. II.) Agency comments are discussed in detail in chapters 2 and 3.

Contents

Executive Summary		2
Chapter 1 Introduction		8
	Army Troop Schools	8
	Management Responsibilities for Troop Schools	9
	Prior Audits	10
	Objectives, Scope, and Methodology	11
Chapter 2 The Army Did Not Justify the Extensive Use of Troop Schools or Spend Training Dollars Effectively		13
	The Army Did Not Adequately Determine the Requirement for Troop School Courses	13
	Certification Programs May Overstate Training Requirement	17
	The Army Lacks Criteria to Determine How Many Soldiers to Cross-Train	19
	Installations Did Not Establish Course Entrance Qualifications	20
	Army Regulations Do Not Authorize Many Courses	21
	Course Evaluations Were Inadequate	22
	Program Monitoring Was Minimal	24
	Conclusions	24
	Recommendations	25
	Agency Comments	25
Chapter 3 Troop School Courses Are Inconsistent With Army Standards and Doctrine		26
	Course Content Is Inconsistent With Army Training Standards	26
	POIs Were Not Reviewed	29
	Many POIs Contained Outdated Doctrine	30
	Conclusions	31
	Recommendations	31
	Agency Comments	31
Appendixes		
	Appendix I: Activities Visited	32
	Appendix II: Comments From the Department of Defense	33
Tables		
	Table 2.1: Adequacy of First-Line Supervisors' Backgrounds to Provide Training	15
	Table 2.2: Sufficiency of First-Line Supervisors' Time to Provide Training	15

Table 2.3: Adequacy of First-Line Supervisors' Backgrounds by Availability of Time to Train Soldiers 16
Table 2.4: Supervisors' Opinions of Soldiers' Abilities to Perform Job Tasks Without Troop School Training 16
Table 2.5: Duty Positions for Which Proficiency Certification Is Required 17
Table 2.6: Percentage of Soldiers Cross-Trained in Other MOSs 19
Table 2.7: Comparison of Soldiers Authorized With Number of Soldiers Trained in PLL/TAMMS Clerk Positions 20
Table 2.8: Comparison of Entrance Qualifications for Selected Troop School Courses 21
Table 3.1: Comparison of Soldier Manual Tasks Included in Troop School Courses for a PLL Clerk 27
Table 3.2: Comparison of Troop School Course Hours 28
Table 3.3: Skill Level 3 and 4 Tasks in Wheel and Track Vehicle Mechanic Courses 29
Table 3.4: Analysis of POIs Reviewed by TRADOC 30
Table 3.5: Comments Provided by TRADOC School Officials on the Doctrinal Adequacy of Troop School POIs 30

Abbreviations

AAA	Army Audit Agency
AIT	Advanced Individual Training
DCSOPS	Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans
FORSCOM	U.S. Army Forces Command
GAO	General Accounting Office
MOS	military occupational specialty
PLL	Prescribed Load List
POI	program of instruction
TAMMS	The Army's Maintenance Management System
TRADOC	U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command
USAREUR	U.S. Army, Europe

Chapter 1

Introduction

Highly trained soldiers represent the cornerstone of Army units' ability to fight and win on the battlefield. Consequently, the Army has devoted considerable resources to developing training programs that focus on teaching and maintaining proficiency in critical job tasks that soldiers must be able to perform. The responsibility for this training is shared by the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and the individual units to which soldiers are assigned.

Initial training given to soldiers when they enter the Army is conducted by TRADOC at its training schools and centers. The training consists of two elements. The first provides training in basic weapons, discipline, and survival skills. It is commonly referred to as basic training. The second element consists of training in the basics of the jobs or military occupational specialties (MOS) soldiers will perform at their first units. This training is referred to as Advanced Individual Training (AIT). Based on the Army's objective to minimize the cost and length of formal training programs, soldiers are not trained in all critical job tasks during AIT. Rather, they are trained in only a portion of the tasks that the Army believes are critical to job performance. Tasks taught during AIT are described in Soldier Manuals and Trainer Guides, which TRADOC has developed for each MOS. In addition, these publications identify all critical tasks soldiers must be able to perform to be fully proficient.

At the unit level, first-line supervisors, normally noncommissioned officers, are the principal trainers because they directly supervise the soldiers and lead the crews, squads, or teams. First-line leaders are responsible for providing refresher training in the critical tasks taught during AIT and for initial training in tasks not covered in AIT.

The Army's training program prescribes a building-block approach for individual skill training and measures a soldier's knowledge progression by the skill level achieved. As soldiers advance in rank, they are expected to know how to perform more complex tasks. Soldier Manuals list critical MOS tasks according to rank: for instance, soldiers in grades E-1 through E-4 (skill level 1) are responsible for knowing how to perform certain tasks, soldiers in grade E-5 (skill level 2) must know how to perform skill level 1 tasks plus additional tasks. The training program is structured to allow a soldier to progress from the apprentice level to the journeyman level.

Army Troop Schools

In addition to the training provided by a unit's first-line leaders, Army Regulation 351-1 authorizes unit commanders to operate "troop schools"

to (1) assist in completing individual training requirements, (2) provide training oriented toward specific missions and equipment, and (3) cross-train soldiers in other MOSs to fill job vacancies or develop backup expertise.

All of the troop schools in the commands we visited were operated under contract by private colleges and paid for by operations and maintenance mission funds. These funds are provided to division commanders for use in preparing soldiers and units to perform assigned missions. In addition to paying for troop schools, division commanders use mission funds to pay for the fuel, repair parts, and ammunition consumed during training.

The Army has not maintained data on the total cost of troop schools or the number of soldiers who attend them. However, information available at one of the two major commands where we conducted our work showed that a substantial number of soldiers had attended the schools. During fiscal years 1986 and 1987, U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) installations alone trained more than 236,000 soldiers. Using an average course length of 40 hours, we estimate that FORSCOM troop schools consumed about 9.4 million hours of soldier time—the equivalent of one 17,000-soldier Army division for nearly 3 months. Contractor costs for the 2-year period were $7.4 million. Troop school enrollment data for the 2-year period at the other major command we visited—U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR)—was not available at the time of our visit. However, contractor costs amounted to $5.1 million.

Management Responsibilities for Troop Schools

Management responsibility for troop schools is divided among the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans (DCSOPS), the major commands, and the individual installations. The DCSOPS is responsible for coordinating with the major commands to establish training policies and reporting standards. In addition, the DCSOPS is responsible for ensuring that all Army organizations adhere to regulatory guidance.

The major commands are responsible for ensuring that installation commanders conduct annual needs assessments for troop schools, including evaluations of available alternatives, reviews of training operations and results, and submission of programs of instruction (POI) to TRADOC schools for review. A POI is a formal document that, among other things, describes course content and hours of instruction.

Army Regulation 351-1 does not provide guidance on how individual installations should operate and manage troop schools. Therefore, each installation has established its own program and organizational structure. The organizational structure at the installations we visited varied considerably as did the number of personnel involved in operating the programs. For example, Fort Bragg's management staff consisted of 4 personnel and Fort Carson's of 30, even though Fort Bragg trained about 14 times as many soldiers as Fort Carson.

Prior Audits

Troop school training has been the subject of prior audits conducted by us and the Army Audit Agency (AAA).

A 1982 AAA report made the following observations:

- Many courses at Fort Bragg had been in existence for more than 5 years and had not been reevaluated, as required by Army regulation, to determine whether they were still necessary or cost-effective.
- The need for certain courses was questionable since as many as 77 percent of the soldiers who attended them were taking courses in job specialties other than their own.[1]

A 1987 AAA report disclosed that certain commands had not

- established procedures to provide adequate control over decisions to contract for training,
- conducted needs assessments and training alternative evaluations prior to contracting for training, or
- established procedures to identify and control the number of unit troop schools in existence and the resources devoted to their operation.[2]

In June 1984, we reported the following observations:

- Neither Army nor TRADOC headquarters reviewed information on the number and types of courses provided by individual installation contracts to determine whether TRADOC might more efficiently and effectively provide the training.

[1] Audit of Noncommissioned Officer Training, SO 83-202, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, October 7, 1982.

[2] Audit of Formal Training: U.S. Army Europe, and Seventh Army, EU-87-213, September 1987.

- Major commands lacked assurance that installations had submitted course POIs for review by TRADOC schools to ensure consistency with Army doctrine.[3]

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Our overall objective was to evaluate the management of the Army's troop schools. More specifically, we wanted to determine whether

- troop school courses and the number of soldiers attending them had been determined in accordance with Army regulation,
- courses taught were consistent with Army training standards and doctrine, and
- the Army had established effective internal controls over the schools' operations.

In those areas where we identified management problems, we also assessed whether internal control improvements were needed.

To gain an understanding of troop school management policies and procedures, we interviewed officials at the following headquarters offices: Department of the Army, Washington, D.C.; FORSCOM, Fort McPherson, Georgia; TRADOC, Fort Monroe, Virginia; USAREUR, Heidelberg, West Germany; 7th Army Training Command, Grafenwoehr, West Germany; V and VII Corps, Frankfurt and Stuttgart, West Germany; and 11 installations (see app. I).

In conducting our review, we selected six of the most common troop school courses taught by installations in the United States. These courses were training for the following positions: (1) unit armorer, (2) unit supply specialist, (3) prescribed load list (PLL) clerk, (4) the Army's maintenance management system (TAMMS) clerk, (5) wheel vehicle mechanic, and (6) track vehicle mechanic. We reviewed the troop school programs for these courses at six installations.[4] In making this review, we examined procedures and interviewed Army officials concerning how installations determine the courses to be taught and the number of soldiers to attend them. We also visited the TRADOC schools responsible for developing training guidance for the MOSs related to the courses we selected.

[3]Letter to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, June 21, 1984.

[4]The six installations are Forts Bragg, Campbell, Carson, Hood, Lewis, and Stewart.

We obtained the course POIs and test instruments used to evaluate students' subject matter knowledge. To obtain an assessment of the material taught in the courses, we asked the Army's subject matter experts at TRADOC schools to evaluate the course POIs in three areas: (1) criticality of tasks as defined by Army criteria, (2) skill level of tasks, and (3) currency of doctrine. We also used an independent consultant to determine whether course tests adequately measured the knowledge soldiers had gained from a troop school course.

We used questionnaires to obtain information from first-line supervisors, first sergeants, and company commanders of soldiers who had recently attended troop schools. The purpose of the questionnaires was to obtain supervisors' views on the adequacy of their backgrounds and time available to provide both enhancement and cross-training in their units. We administered the questionnaires at the three installations (Forts Bragg, Hood, and Lewis) that had the largest attendance in the troop school courses we reviewed. We compiled data from 645 questionnaires, representing an overall response rate of 81 percent.

We conducted our review from January to November 1987 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. The Department of Defense provided written comments on a draft of this report. These comments (see app. II) are discussed in chapters 2 and 3.

The Army Did Not Justify the Extensive Use of Troop Schools or Spend Training Dollars Effectively

Installation commanders did not make adequate assessments of need and evaluations of alternatives to the use of troop schools to provide individual skill training, as required by Army regulation. Instead, troop school courses were justified based on past usage. As a result, the Army does not know whether soldiers who attended troop schools needed the training, and some courses duplicated training offered elsewhere in the Army. In addition, contractor programs used to test and certify soldiers' qualifications were not reviewed by installation officials to ensure that programs met Army standards and adequately measured soldier proficiency.

The Army Did Not Adequately Determine the Requirement for Troop School Courses

Although troop school courses have been conducted for years, the Army has not determined whether contracted courses are required or how many soldiers should attend them. The Army's troop school program has become self-perpetuating because its justification is based on past attendance rather than an assessment of future training requirements. In addition, alternatives to troop schools were not adequately considered.

Installations Did Not Conduct Adequate Needs Assessments

According to Army Regulation 351-1, installation commanders are required to conduct annual assessments to determine what troop school courses are required. None of the installations we visited, however, had conducted adequate needs assessments before contracting for troop school courses. In general, the installations assumed that courses were required if units had used the available training spaces in the past. The number of soldiers enrolled in the courses was also based on past enrollment.

Army Regulation 351-1 does not provide guidance on what factors should be considered in making a needs assessment. Installation officials offered varying opinions on what constitutes an adequate needs assessment. Consequently, we found varying emphasis placed on assessing need. For example, at Fort Carson a needs assessment for a training contract was based on the number of desks that could be accommodated by the training facility and the number of times the courses were to be offered. Units were then required to provide a sufficient number of soldiers to fill the training spaces. In Europe, major subordinate units were assigned quotas for sending soldiers to troop schools.

Conversely, Fort Stewart had established a more comprehensive assessment process. Here, training officials had established a committee to collect data on the training requirements of subordinate units and to develop initial task lists for course development. The committee charter provided for representation from major subordinate units to obtain the required information, such as training needs that could not be met at the unit level. In practice, however, the committee lacked support from subordinate units. In some cases, units had not assigned personnel to the committee, and in other cases the units had not assigned personnel qualified to assess training requirements.

Installations Did Not Consider Training Alternatives

Army Regulation 351-1 also requires commanders to evaluate alternatives to troop schools to determine the most cost-effective means of providing training. For example, the Army's specialized schools have developed Training Extension Course lessons, which describe how to perform critical MOS tasks. These lessons have been distributed to all Army battalions. TRADOC also operates an accredited extension of its service school curricula, the Army Correspondence Course Program, which is another alternative an installation commander could consider. This program includes courses for the various skill levels of an MOS. Installation commanders could also choose to use first-line supervisors to provide on-the-job training.

Army regulations, however, do not provide guidance to commanders on what alternatives should be considered or what role military personnel at the unit level should assume in providing required enhancement training in soldiers' primary MOSs. Since the people most likely to provide hands-on training in Soldier Manual tasks are first-line supervisors, we asked their opinion on the adequacy of their backgrounds to provide this training. As shown in table 2.1, most first-line supervisors (66 percent) believed that their backgrounds were "generally adequate" or "more than adequate" to train soldiers in their primary MOSs. However, about one fourth (26 percent) of the supervisors believed that their backgrounds were "very inadequate" or "generally inadequate" to provide such training.

Table 2.1: Adequacy of First-Line Supervisors' Backgrounds to Provide Training

Question: In your opinion, how adequate or inadequate is your background for training soldiers in their primary MOSs?

	Number	Percentage
Very inadequate	35	15
Generally inadequate	27	11
Of marginal or borderline adequacy	19	8
Generally adequate	97	41
More than adequate	61	25
Total	**239**	**100**

Another factor that might affect supervisors' ability to provide MOS training is the amount of time available to perform such tasks. We asked supervisors to consider the amount of time they have had available to train soldiers in the required Soldier Manual tasks while at installations that provided troop school training.

As shown in table 2.2, more than half of the first-line supervisors (56 percent) said that they had sufficient time, while only 13 percent said that sufficient time was seldom available.

Table 2.2: Sufficiency of First-Line Supervisors' Time to Provide Training

Question: Consider the amount of time you have had at this installation to train soldiers in the required Soldier Manual tasks. How frequently, if at all, have you had enough time to train them?

	Number	Percentage
Always or almost always	34	14
Very often	42	18
Often	57	24
Sometimes	73	31
Seldom	32	13
Total	**238**	**100**

Optimally, those providing MOS training should possess both adequate backgrounds and enough time to provide the training. As shown in table 2.3, more than one half (55 percent) of the first-line supervisors reported having both adequate backgrounds and enough time—at least sometimes—to provide training in soldiers' primary MOSs.

Table 2.3: Adequacy of First-Line Supervisors' Backgrounds by Availability of Time to Train Soldiers

Background	Have enough time	
	At least sometimes	Seldom
Adequate	121 (55 percent)	19 (8 percent)
Marginal	17 (8 percent)	2 (1 percent)
Inadequate	51 (23 percent)	11 (5 percent)

In order to obtain an overview of supervisors' opinions of the value of troop school training to the unit, we asked supervisors to assess the extent to which soldiers under their supervision would be able to perform all necessary and critical job tasks if troop school training were not available.

As shown in table 2.4, more than one third of first-line supervisors (34 percent), first sergeants (37 percent), and company commanders (38 percent) believed that, to a "great" or "very great" extent, the soldiers could perform all tasks. Twenty-six percent or less said that the soldiers could perform these tasks to "some extent" or to "little or no extent" without troop school training.

Table 2.4: Supervisors' Opinions of Soldiers' Abilities to Perform Job Tasks Without Troop School Training

Question: Consider the training needs of all soldiers under your supervision. If troop school MOS refresher training were not available, to what extent would the soldiers you supervise be able to perform all necessary and critical job tasks?

	First line supervisors		First sergeants		Company commanders	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Very great extent	20	9	11	6	10	5
Great extent	55	25	56	31	62	33
Moderate extent	89	40	74	40	72	39
Some extent	47	21	36	20	35	19
Little or no extent	12	5	5	3	8	4
Total	223	100	182	100	187	100

First-line supervisors having an adequate background to provide training in a soldier's primary MOS should also be able to provide cross-training because cross-training generally involves only the more elementary tasks of an MOS.

Certification Programs May Overstate Training Requirement

Tests developed by contractors to assess or certify soldier proficiency were not reviewed by Army officials to determine their adequacy. Moreover, the certification policies adopted by some installations might have overstated the requirement for troop school training.

Certification Tests Were Not Reviewed

Many installations have established certification programs to test the proficiency of soldiers in their primary MOSs. This program requires soldiers to take certification examinations developed by the contractors who teach troop school courses. At some installations, failure of the examination means automatic enrollment in a course. In some cases, installations also require soldiers to take certification examinations upon completion of the courses. This process requires an effective internal control measure of review and approval by the Army to prevent contractors from using this authority to create a false demand for courses. However, none of the installations we visited had implemented review procedures or controls to ensure that the tests met Army standards or adequately measured soldier proficiency. For example, officials at Fort Carson had not seen the certification tests until they obtained copies from the contractor at our request.

Each installation's certification program is basically autonomous and highly individualized. Each installation commander has decided which duty positions are most critical and has established certification programs for those positions. As shown in table 2.5, Fort Bragg requires certification in PLL and TAMMS; Fort Hood requires certification in PLL, TAMMS, and unit armorer positions; while Fort Campbell has no certification program.

Table 2.5: Duty Positions for Which Proficiency Certification Is Required

Installation	PLL	TAMMS	Unit supply	Unit armorer	Wheel mechanic	Track mechanic
Fort Bragg	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Fort Campbell	No	No	No	No	No	No
Fort Carson	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Fort Hood	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Fort Lewis	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Fort Stewart	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
3rd Infantry Division	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
8th Infantry Division	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
5th Signal Command	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

Fort Campbell officials stated that, because the program is so decentralized and so varied among installations, they saw no need to invest resources in certifying soldiers when other installations would not honor that certification. Even if soldiers are certified at one installation, Fort Campbell officials said that when they transfer to another installation to work in the same duty positions, the new installation requires them to pass its own certification test.

Certification Policies May Result in Unnecessary Training

At Fort Lewis, Fort Stewart, the 3rd Infantry Division, and the 8th Infantry Division, failure of the certification examination meant automatic enrollment in a troop school course. The other installations with certification programs highly recommended that soldiers who failed the examination take the related course. Also, the certification program in the 5th Signal Command in Europe required all arriving soldiers and supervisors assigned to TAMMS/PLL positions to attend TAMMS and PLL courses regardless of prior training. Unlike the other European installations we visited, the 5th Signal Command did not include a certification examination to assess whether the soldier actually required training. Instead, certification was based solely on successful completion of the course.

The frequency of soldier and supervisor certification varied among installations and influenced the need for course attendance. For example, the 3rd Infantry Division required annual recertification of TAMMS and PLL clerks. These clerks' supervisors were also encouraged to participate in the certification program. Some unit commanders believed that a general knowledge of TAMMS and PLL duties was desirable for all officers, and certification was required. For example, at the 8th Infantry Division, all TAMMS and PLL clerks, supervisors, maintenance and motor sergeants, and officers were required to pass the certification examination. At Fort Lewis, many officers, in addition to soldiers and noncommissioned officers, were required to pass the PLL and TAMMS certification examinations, and recertification was required annually. Fort Lewis had no written policy requiring officer certification, but unit commanders had imposed a certification requirement. Because needs assessments were generally not conducted, these certification policies may require soldiers to attend troop school courses unnecessarily.

Aside from the impact that certification testing may have on troop school enrollment, the need for installation commanders to contract for certification test development appears questionable in view of the Army's Skill Qualification Test program. This program requires that

soldiers' proficiency be evaluated annually based on tests covering critical MOS tasks. These tests are developed by TRADOC and administered by installation personnel. Officials at the installations we visited could not explain why certification tests were being used in addition to the Army's program.

The Army Lacks Criteria to Determine How Many Soldiers to Cross-Train

The majority of soldiers who attended troop schools took courses in MOSs that differed from their primary MOSs. This training, referred to as cross-training, is given to enable soldiers to fill in for regularly assigned soldiers who are absent from the unit or to handle heavy work loads. According to enrollment data, 73 percent of the soldiers in the courses we reviewed did not hold the primary MOS of the course. The percentage of soldiers cross-trained at each installation is shown in table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Percentage of Soldiers Cross-Trained in Other MOSs

Figures in percent

	Course					
Installation	PLL	TAMMS	Unit supply clerk	Unit armorer	Wheel vehicle mechanic	Track vehicle mechanic
Fort Campbell[a]	69.2	66.7	56.0	83.3	[b]	[b]
Fort Lewis	81.9	86.2	54.7	79.2	66.6	[b]
Fort Carson	81.3	83.4	65.6	81.6	74.7	97.7
Fort Bragg	89.9	88.7	56.9	82.5	70.1	[b]
Fort Hood[a]	78.0	80.0	unknown	65.6	47.8	78.9

Note: For courses conducted from fiscal year 1986 through August 1987. We did not collect this data at Fort Stewart.

[a]Forts Hood and Campbell did not maintain enrollment data. These figures are for one iteration of each course held between May and August 1987 at Fort Hood and in July 1987 at Fort Campbell.

[b]Courses not taught.

Although Army Regulation 351-1 authorizes the use of troop schools to provide cross-training, the Army has not developed criteria regarding which MOSs require backup expertise or how many soldiers should be trained for this purpose. Installation officials did not know how many soldiers were being cross-trained, nor could they provide an explanation for the large number enrolled for this purpose. Our analysis showed that the number of soldiers cross-trained might have been excessive. As shown in table 2.7, at Fort Lewis as many as five soldiers were cross-trained for each authorized PLL/TAMMS clerk position.

Table 2.7: Comparison of Soldiers Authorized With Number of Soldiers Trained in PLL/TAMMS Clerk Positions

Installation	Number of soldiers authorized	Number of soldiers trained in troop school	Ratio of soldiers authorized to soldiers trained[a]
Fort Campbell	242	475	2:1
Fort Lewis	365	1,865	5:1
Fort Carson	230	680	3:1
Fort Bragg	396	597	2:1

Note: We did not collect this data at Forts Hood and Stewart.

[a]Rounded to nearest whole number.

Installations Did Not Establish Course Entrance Qualifications

Army Regulation 351-1 states that it is the major commands' responsibility to ensure that installations establish and enforce course entrance qualifications. Entrance qualifications are generally used to help ensure that the best qualified soldiers are selected for training and that those selected will have a sufficient opportunity to use the training. For example, some installations require that soldiers have a minimum number of months remaining in their tours at the installation. Other installations require that a soldier have a specific intelligence test score to help ensure satisfactory completion of the course.

Army regulations do not provide guidance concerning entrance qualifications for troop school courses. Consequently, there are no standard entrance qualifications, and there is wide variation from base to base, as shown in table 2.8.

Table 2.8: Comparison of Entrance Qualifications for Selected Troop School Courses

Entrance Qualification	Fort Hood	Fort Campbell	Fort Carson	Fort Lewis	Fort Bragg	Europe
Minimum number of months soldier will remain at installation after course completion						
PLL	None	None	12	6	9	6
TAMMS	None	None	12	6	9	6
Unit supply specialist	None	None	12	6	9	6
Unit armorer	None	None	12	6	9	6
Wheel vehicle mechanic	None	[a]	12	6	10	[a]
Intelligence score						
PLL	100	None	None	90	90	None
TAMMS	None	None	None	90	95	None
Unit supply specialist	100	None	None	90	95	None
Unit armorer	None	None	None	90	85	None[b]
Wheel vehicle mechanic	None	[a]	None	90	85	[a]

[a]Course not conducted at this installation.

[b]In Europe, this course is called Small Arms Maintenance.

The effect of these variations is that a soldier who qualifies for course enrollment at one installation may not qualify for the same course at another installation. More importantly, where entrance requirements for courses have not been established, there are no controls to ensure that the soldiers selected for training will benefit the Army most.

Army Regulations Do Not Authorize Many Courses

Army Regulation 351-1 states that troop schools should not be used to (1) provide tactical or combat-related training or (2) duplicate courses taught elsewhere in the Army. Some troop school programs we reviewed, however, did not comply with these provisions. We found that troop schools at Fort Bragg, Fort Lewis, and Fort Campbell included tactical courses such as Basic Marksmanship, M60 Machine Gunner, and Nuclear-Biological-Chemical training. According to a November 1984 DCSOPS memorandum to all major commands, tactical training is the "bread and butter" of the Army and should only be taught by Army personnel. In its 1987 review, AAA found that USAREUR had contracted for tactical training involving the M113 armored personnel carrier and an armor vehicle launch bridge.

We also found that troop schools at Fort Hood, Fort Lewis, Fort Campbell and in Europe included a Battalion Training Management System course that duplicates training offered elsewhere by the Army. This

course consists of four workshops designed to teach noncommissioned officers and officers how to become better leaders. This course objective, however, is also incorporated in courses taught by Army personnel. Courses such as the Primary Leadership Development Course, Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course, Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course, and the Officer Basic Course are designed to provide training in leadership fundamentals and techniques.

Data on the number of soldiers who attended either tactical or Battalion Training Management System courses in troop schools was not kept by the Army. However, we determined that, in FORSCOM and USAREUR alone, at least 35,000 soldiers had attended these courses in fiscal years 1986 and 1987. Troop school officials at the installations we visited could not explain why the schools did not comply with Army regulations covering such courses.

Course Evaluations Were Inadequate

Army Regulation 351-1 requires installation commanders to conduct periodic evaluations of troop school training. This requirement is an important internal control procedure to help ensure that program objectives are achieved. We found, however, that none of the installations had conducted adequate evaluations.

Troop school evaluations were based primarily on students' course critiques and class inspections by contracting officer representatives and troop school officials. These procedures did not provide sufficient evaluative information. For example, student critiques were designed to obtain only general information based on answers to questions such as the following: Were all course objectives met? Would you recommend this course to others? What will you be better able to perform after training? While such information could provide the framework for an effective evaluation, the critiques were not analyzed on an aggregate basis, nor was there any follow-up of reported problem areas. Similarly, inspections by contracting officer representatives and troop school officials focused on such factors as instructor appearance, condition of the classroom, and use of visual aids.

Most troop schools administered post-course tests to measure knowledge gained by students. We found that some test instruments may not adequately measure knowledge gained from a troop school course and that test quality varied markedly. Even though the tests were not equal in quality, an aggregate analysis of scores could provide valuable evaluative data.

We evaluated selected tests to determine (1) adherence to normal standards of test construction, e.g., were the questions understandable and fair, or were response alternatives reasonable; (2) adequacy in assessing soldier performance as it reflects learning; and (3) test comparability across installations.

Although most questions were understandable and fair, all response alternatives were not good. In general, the tests emphasized memorization rather than application of knowledge. At Fort Carson, the unit armorer course tests relied primarily on true-false choice answers, which increase the likelihood of being able to improve one's scores by merely guessing. On the other hand, Fort Hood's tests excluded true-false questions and included both multiple-choice questions and practical exercises requiring the completion of forms. In addition, armorer course tests at Fort Carson, Fort Bragg, and Fort Campbell contained only cursory emphasis on the use of manuals and forms and the physical security of weapons. Fort Hood's and Fort Lewis's unit armorer courses not only had more extensive coverage of these areas but also covered weapons maintenance and troubleshooting.

The unit supply tests varied markedly in their material coverage and quality, and installation tests were not comparable. Again, Fort Hood had the most extensive and well-designed test. The test covered a large scope of material and was strengthened by the use of five practical performance exercises. Fort Carson's supply final exam consisted of these same five practical exercises. Fort Carson's certification exam, given prior to enrollment to soldiers with a primary MOS in supply, however, consisted of multiple-choice and true-false questions without any practical exercises. Fort Carson's supply certification exam was not quite as extensive as Fort Hood's but was adequate. The Fort Campbell and Fort Lewis supply tests were both much less extensive in material coverage than those of Fort Hood and Fort Carson. In addition, Fort Lewis's tests provided a less reliable basis for measuring knowledge gained, since they did not evaluate the soldier's ability to apply the knowledge. The Fort Bragg open-book supply test contained 60 true-false, fill-in-the-blank, and multiple-choice questions and was simpler than the other installations' tests. The questions were nonstandardized in format and contained grammatical and typographical errors.

Program Monitoring Was Minimal

Another important internal control element is program monitoring. According to troop school regulations, programs are to be monitored by DCSOPS, major command, and installation officials. However, the information needed for effective monitoring, such as the courses being conducted and the criteria used to select course participants, was not obtained, and program officials could not ensure compliance with Army regulations.

Although troop school programs have been conducted for many years, DCSOPS and major command officials have not established procedures to monitor the programs. Monitoring was essentially limited to whatever was done at the installation level, and these efforts were minimal. For example, none of the installations were able to tell us how many soldiers were being cross-trained. Moreover, without consulting the contractor, Fort Carson officials could not tell us with certainty how many soldiers had been trained. In addition, at Fort Lewis, more than 2 years had elapsed before officials took action to obtain official POIs for all the courses.

We found that major commands and DCSOPS had done little or no monitoring of troop schools. For example, although major commands are responsible for ensuring that installations conduct annual needs assessments for troop schools, neither FORSCOM nor USAREUR officials had monitored compliance with this provision. Further, DCSOPS had not monitored activities to ensure adherence to regulations and to establish reporting standards. DCSOPS officials did not know which installations had troop school programs, what courses were taught, or how many soldiers were trained.

Conclusions

The Army's troop school program lacks effective management oversight, and none of the installations we visited fully complied with Army Regulation 351-1. The program has become self-sustaining and is justified primarily by past attendance. The necessity and effectiveness of the troop school program are unclear.

Contracts for troop school courses were not adequately justified because specific training needs had not been determined. As a result, the required training courses and the number of soldiers who should attend them were not determined. Until the Army establishes effective internal controls to ensure that regulatory requirements such as needs assessments, program monitoring, and program evaluation are effectively and

consistently implemented, it cannot ensure that funds for troop school courses are spent as prudently as possible.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Secretary of the Army take the following actions:

- Develop guidance on factors that commanders should consider, including alternative training sources, in conducting needs assessments.
- Develop standardized criteria for commanders to use to (1) determine the number of soldiers who should be cross- trained to provide adequate backup expertise, (2) establish entrance qualifications for enrollment in troop school courses, and (3) evaluate program effectiveness.
- Develop and implement internal control procedures to ensure that adequate needs assessments are conducted before installations contract for training and that troop school programs are properly monitored and evaluated.
- Determine whether soldier certification tests should be continued in view of the Skill Qualification Test program in place throughout the Army. If certification is found to be necessary, develop standardized tests for use in all troop school programs.

Agency Comments

The Department of Defense agreed with each of our findings and recommendations. It said that the Army lacks the internal controls needed to ensure that the troop school training program is properly administered and, as a result, will consider including this deficiency in the Secretary of the Army's Annual Assurance Statement for fiscal year 1988.[1] In response to our recommendations, Defense said that the Army would (1) develop guidance for conducting needs assessments, including a requirement that commanders consider alternatives to troop school training; (2) revise its regulations to establish enrollee entrance qualifications and specify procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of troop schools; (3) provide guidance on the factors to be considered in determining cross-training requirements; (4) implement internal control measures to ensure that needs assessments are accurate and that troop school programs are monitored for effective training; and (5) develop standardized certification tests for implementation in fiscal year 1989 if certification testing in troop schools is found to be appropriate.

[1]This report is prepared in accordance with the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982 (Public Law 97-255).

Troop School Courses Are Inconsistent With Army Standards and Doctrine

The Army has not established effective internal controls to ensure that troop school courses taught by contractors are consistent with Army training standards and doctrine. For instance, many course POIs had not been reviewed and approved by TRADOC schools as required by Army regulation. Consequently, courses varied from base to base in content and adherence to Army training standards. The POIs also contained outdated doctrine. In addition, the use of a single course to provide both enhancement training and cross-training may not be effective in achieving cross-training objectives.

Course Content Is Inconsistent With Army Training Standards

Over the past 10 years, the Army has devoted considerable resources to identifying the critical job tasks that soldiers need to be proficient in to perform their jobs effectively in accordance with prescribed Army standards. The tasks, described in a Soldier Manual for each MOS, were developed to help ensure standardized training throughout the Army. However, the tasks taught in troop schools varied widely from base to base and did not include all the performance elements the Army considers necessary for proper performance. Some courses were designed to teach skills at levels higher than those prescribed by Army training standards.

Tasks Taught Varied Widely

Troop schools at each installation used the same course to (1) enhance the skills of soldiers who held the course MOS and (2) provide initial training to soldiers who held different MOSs and were enrolled for cross-training. Because course requirements for cross-training need to be more elementary and comprehensive, we asked TRADOC school officials to compare the tasks taught in troop school courses with the tasks prescribed by Army Soldier Manuals. This comparison showed that most troop school courses included only a small number of Soldier Manual tasks and that the tasks covered varied considerably from base to base. For example, the Soldier Manual for a PLL clerk (skill levels 1 and 2) prescribes 25 tasks. The number of tasks taught in troop school courses, however, ranged from 5 at Fort Bragg to 9 at Fort Carson, as shown in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Comparison of Soldier Manual Tasks Included in Troop School Courses for a PLL Clerk

	Fort Bragg	Fort Carson	Fort Lewis	Fort Hood
Number of Soldier Manual tasks included in troop school POI	5	9	7	7
Soldier Manual tasks included in POIs				
101-521-1133	X	X		
101-539-1102	X	X	X	X
101-539-1128	X	X	X	X
101-539-1129	X	X	X	X
101-539-1132	X	X	X	X
101-539-1116		X		X
101-539-1121		X		X
101-539-1124		X		
101-539-1127		X		
101-521-1157			X	
101-521-1163			X	X
101-539-1115			X	

Each Soldier Manual task is comprised of several elements in which a soldier must achieve proficiency for proper job performance. For example, a task calling for a PLL clerk to prepare and process a request for a repair part requires the clerk to be proficient in each of the following performance elements:

1. Gathers and verifies all necessary data to prepare the request.

2. Checks direct exchange and supply store listing for the part.

3. Prepares the appropriate request form.

4. Posts the request to the appropriate supply records.

5. Retains a file copy of the request in the due-in status file.

6. Forwards the request document to the supply support activity.

According to TRADOC officials, a soldier must be proficient in all performance elements to be able to perform tasks in accordance with Army standards.

TRADOC school officials' review of troop school courses showed that only selected performance elements of each Soldier Manual task had been

included. TRADOC officials said that this approach might be satisfactory for soldiers who hold the MOS for the course taught, as they already have a basic understanding of the entire job. However, the majority of soldiers who attend troop schools are enrolled for cross-training, and TRADOC officials believe that the courses may not meet these soldiers' needs because course requirements for cross-training need to be more elementary.

Number of Course Hours Varied Widely

We also found substantial variation in the length of troop school courses. While some differences might be expected based on each installation's unique requirements, unique requirements do not seem to account for the extent of variation in course length illustrated in table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Comparison of Troop School Course Hours

Figures in hours

	Course					
Installation	PLL	TAMMS	Unit armorer	Unit supply clerk	Wheel vehicle mechanic	Track vehicle mechanic
Fort Campbell	40	40	40	40	[a]	[a]
Fort Lewis	40	40	120	80	120	[a]
Fort Carson	76	76	76	114	114	108
Fort Bragg	120	40	80	120	240	[a]
Fort Hood	80	81	120	80	160	120
Europe	32	40	68[b]	80	[a]	[a]

[a]Course not taught at this location.

[b]In Europe, this course is called Small Arms Maintenance.

Skills Were Taught Out of Sequence

The Army's training program prescribes a building-block approach for individual skill training. In other words, as soldiers advance in rank and in skill level, they are expected to know how to perform more complex tasks. According to TRADOC school officials, troop school courses should be designed in accordance with this approach. However, courses for wheel and track vehicle mechanics included skill level tasks more advanced than the skill levels of most soldiers who attended them.

Almost 90 percent of the soldiers who attended wheel and track vehicle mechanic courses were skill level 1 soldiers. Based on TRADOC school officials' review of course POIs, however, the wheel and track vehicle

mechanic courses contained many skill level 3 and 4 tasks, as shown in table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Skill Level 3 and 4 Tasks in Wheel and Track Vehicle Mechanic Courses

Installation/course	Number of POI tasks reviewed	Number of skill level 3 and 4 tasks	Percentage of skill level 3 and 4 tasks
Fort Bragg Wheel vehicle mechanic	30	15	50
Fort Carson Wheel vehicle mechanic	21	6	29
Fort Hood Wheel vehicle mechanic	68	58	85
Fort Carson Track vehicle mechanic	30	5	17

POIs Were Not Reviewed

The Army lacks effective control procedures to ensure that contractor-developed POIs adhere to Army training standards. POIs, in most cases, were not reviewed by either installation or TRADOC school officials.

Installation officials relied completely on contractors to develop troop school course materials. These materials should be reviewed to ensure their consistency with Army training standards. It did not appear, however, that troop school officials had done so. For example, officials at each of the bases could not tell us which Soldier Manual tasks were covered by the POIs or the skill levels of instruction. Further, many of the POIs had not been reviewed by TRADOC schools to ensure their adherence to Army standards and doctrine. In some cases, POIs had not been submitted to TRADOC.

Our review of FORSCOM records for September 1986 to October 1987 showed that, overall, 79 percent of the POIs at the six installations we visited had not been reviewed by TRADOC. As shown in table 3.4, the percentage of POIs not reviewed by TRADOC ranged from 35 percent at Fort Carson to 100 percent at Fort Lewis.

Table 3.4: Analysis of POIs Reviewed by TRADOC

Installation	Number of courses	Number of POIs submitted for review	Number reviewed	Percentage not reviewed
Fort Campbell	8	8	2	75
Fort Lewis	25	0	0	100
Fort Carson	17	16	11	35
Fort Bragg	26	4	2	92
Fort Hood	22	13	7	68
Fort Stewart	9	8	1	89

Many POIs Contained Outdated Doctrine

In their review of course POIs, TRADOC school officials identified a number of tasks that contained outdated Army doctrine or procedures. For example, according to U.S. Army Ordnance School officials, 23 of the 30 instructional lessons in Fort Bragg's wheel vehicle mechanic course contained references to outdated Army forms or manuals. In addition, several lessons covered intermediate maintenance procedures that are not the responsibility of unit wheel vehicle mechanics. Additional examples of outdated doctrine identified by Quartermaster and Ordnance school officials are summarized in table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Comments Provided by TRADOC School Officials on the Doctrinal Adequacy of Troop School POIs

Troop school course	TRADOC school comment
TAMMS, Fort Lewis	The doctrine used was not current, and the POI contained lesson plans that covered tasks no longer in use, such as TAMMS Task Number 101-539-1109, preparing DA Form 2402.
TAMMS, Fort Bragg	The POI contained doctrine that was not current (such as DA PAM 38-750, which is obsolete.)
PLL, Fort Carson	The POI contained some obsolete tasks such as "direct exchange procedures," that has been replaced by "reparable exchange."
PLL, Fort Bragg	The POI contained direct exchange procedures that are no longer used.
Wheel Vehicle Mechanic, Fort Hood	The POI contained numerous lessons covering power generator troubleshooting and repair, which are not part of the MOS.
Wheel Vehicle Mechanic, Fort Carson and Fort Lewis	The POIs either (1) did not contain current maintenance manual references or (2) contained tasks that had been eliminated in current maintenance manuals.

In a June 1, 1987, memorandum, the Fort Lewis Troop School Commander summarized course deficiencies in doctrine as follows:

"The contractor's response to compliance with the contract, for updated POIs has been unacceptable. The material as presented does not reflect current Army doctrine nor does it resemble what is being taught in current School Command courses.

Lack of compliance to Army training doctrine is so blatant that a course by course material survey could be both wasteful of time and expense. The contractor simply has not kept the POIs current for two or three years."

Conclusions

The Army needs to establish internal control procedures to ensure that courses taught in troop schools (1) are consistent with Army training standards, (2) are adequate to teach skills required by soldiers who are cross-trained, and (3) contain current doctrine. Review of contractor-developed POIs by TRADOC, as called for by Army regulation, is a necessary first step. However, in the long run greater efficiency may be achieved if the Army develops standardized POIs for use in all troop schools. These POIs could be supplemented with local procedures as necessary. A standardized POI could reduce contracting costs incurred for individual POI development as well as help to ensure more consistent training in critical MOS tasks from base to base.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Secretary of the Army take the following actions:

- Ensure that POIs currently used in troop schools are reviewed and approved by TRADOC schools.
- Direct TRADOC to develop standardized POIs, as new requirements for troop school courses are identified.

Agency Comments

The Department of Defense agreed with our findings and recommendations. It said that (1) TRADOC will review current troop school POIs and make necessary revisions to comply with current Army doctrine and (2) the Army will revise its regulations to ensure that standardized POIs are developed for new troop school courses.

Activities Visited

Army Bases in the United States

U.S. Army Quartermaster School, Ft. Lee, Virginia

U.S. Army Ordnance Center and School, Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Maryland

24th Infantry Division (Mechanized), Ft. Stewart, Georgia

82nd Airborne Division, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina

4th Infantry Division (Mechanized), Ft. Carson, Colorado

2nd Armored Division, Ft. Hood, Texas

1st Cavalry Division, Ft. Hood, Texas

9th Infantry Division, Ft. Lewis, Washington

101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Ft. Campbell, Kentucky

Army Activities in Europe

5th Signal Command, Worms, West Germany

8th Infantry Division, Bad Kreuznach, West Germany

3rd Infantry Division, Wurzburg, West Germany

Comments From the Department of Defense

FORCE MANAGEMENT
AND PERSONNEL

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

WASHINGTON, D C 20301-4000

07 JUL 1988

Mr. Frank C. Conahan
Director, National Security and
International Affairs Division
U.S. General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Conahan:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the draft GAO report, "ARMY TRAINING: Need to Strengthen Internal Controls Over Troop Schools," dated May 24, 1988 (GAO Code 393227/OSD Case 7650).

The report accurately identifies a number of problems in the Army troop school training program. The DoD also agrees that the problems cited by the GAO require immediate attention in order to improve the quality of this necessary unit educational program. Troop schools will receive intense Army scrutiny in all major commands to ensure that the limited resources available are used to provide the most effective and efficient training to the soldier. During the remainder of FY 1988 and during FY 1989, the Army intends to correct those areas addressed by the GAO and ensure that any other deficiencies that may exist are remedied. In addition, the Army troop school training program will be a subject for review during the formulation of the DoD FY 1990/ FY 1991 budget request.

The DoD also agrees that the Army lacks the internal controls needed to ensure the troop school training is properly administered. Internal control measures will be instituted for FY 1989; and, if applicable, the Army will include this deficiency in its FY 1988 Annual Assurance Statement.

The detailed DoD comments on the GAO findings and recommendations are provided in the enclosure.

Sincerely,

Grant S. Green, Jr

Enclosure

GAO DRAFT REPORT - DATED MAY 24, 1988
(GAO CODE 393227) OSD CASE 7650

"ARMY TRAINING: NEED TO STRENGTHEN INTERNAL CONTROLS OVER TROOP SCHOOLS"

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMENTS
* * * * *

FINDINGS

- FINDING A: Troop Schools. The GAO reported that training given to soldiers when they first join the Army consists of basic training and Advanced Individual Training (AIT), conducted by Army schools and training centers. The GAO further reported that, after completion of initial training, soldiers are assigned to Army units where first-line supervisors provide training in additional tasks, enabling soldiers to progress from the apprentice to the journeyman level in their Military Occupational Specialties (MOS). The GAO observed that, in addition to the training provided by first-line unit leaders, Army Regulation 351-1 authorizes unit commanders to operate "troop schools" to (1) assist in completing individual training requirements, (2) provide training oriented toward specific missions and equipment, and (3) cross-train soldiers in other MOSs to fill job vacancies or develop backup expertise. The GAO found that all of the troop schools in the commands it visited were operated under contract by private colleges. The GAO further found, however, that the Army has not maintained data on the total cost of troop schools or the number of soldiers who attend them. The GAO reported that, during FY 1986 and FY 1987, the U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) contractor costs for such training totaled $7.4 million, while similar U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) costs were $5.1 million (pp. 2-3, pp. 12-14/GAO Draft Report)

  DoD RESPONSE: Concur. Army Headquarters staff have not maintained data on the total annual cost of troop schools or the total number of soldiers who attend. Data on program expenditures, enrollees and graduates have only been maintained by the major command and local installation commanders, who are responsible for the conduct of troop school training.

Now on pp. 2-3 and 8-9.

- FINDING B: Management Responsibilities For Troop Schools. The GAO reported that management responsibility for troop schools is divided among the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans (DCSOPS), the major commands, and the individual installations. The GAO observed that the DCSOPS is responsible for coordinating policies and establishing

Enclosure

Now on pp. 2 and 9-10.

reporting standards, while the major commands are responsible for insuring that installations conduct needs assessments and reviews, and for submitting programs of instruction (POI) to the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Schools for review. The GAO also observed that Army Regulation 351-1 does not provide guidance on how individual installations should operate and manage troop schools and, therefore, each installation has established its own program and organizational structure. (pp. 3, pp. 14-15/GAO Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. Army regulations which do not currently provide adequate guidance for the operation and management of troop schools will be revised. (See DoD responses to Recommendations).

Now on pp. 10-11.

- o FINDING C: Prior Audits. The GAO reported that troop school training has been the subject of prior audits conducted by both the GAO and the Army Audit Agency (AAA). The GAO noted that, in a 1982 report, the AAA observed many courses had not been reevaluated and certain courses were questionable (i.e., as many as 77 percent of attendees were taking courses in an MOS other than their own). The GAO also noted that a 1987 AAA report disclosed that certain commands had not (1) established adequate control procedures for contracting for training, (2) conducted needs assessments or alternative evaluations, or (3) established procedures to identify the resources devoted to troop schools. The GAO referred to a June 21, 1984, letter to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs 1/, in which it [the GAO] observed that (1) neither Army nor TRADOC headquarters reviewed the number and types of courses at installations and (2) major commands lacked assurance that installations had submitted course POIs to TRADOC schools. (pp. 15-16/GAO Draft Report)

  DoD RESPONSE: Concur.

- o FINDING D: The Army Did Not Adequately Determine The Requirement For Troop School Courses. The GAO reported that, before contracting for courses, none of the installations it visited had conducted adequate needs assessments or considered training alternatives, as required by Army regulations. The GAO observed that Army regulations do not provide adequate guidance in these areas and, consequently,

1/ Unnumbered Letter Report, "Survey of Army Installations' Contracting For Skill Training," dated June 21, 1984 (GAO Code 393043/OSD Case 6545)

the Army had not determined whether contracted courses were required or how many soldiers should attend them. The GAO surveyed first-line supervisors on the adequacy of their own training and time available to provide enhancement training in soldier MOS skills. Based on the survey, the GAO reported that more than half felt they had adequate background and sufficient time. The GAO further reported that more than a third of the supervisors felt that soldiers could perform all necessary and critical skills, even if troop school training were not available. The GAO also observed that the troop school program has become self-perpetuating since it is based on past usage rather than an assessment of training need. (The GAO noted, for example, that at one installation, units were required to enroll soldiers in classes so that all contracted training spaces were filled.) (p. 4, pp. 19-24/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 3 and 13-16

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The requirements for troop school courses must be based on an assessment of the training need and the training alternatives available to meet that need.

- FINDING E: Certification Programs May Overstate Training Requirement. The GAO reported that many installations have established certification programs to test the proficiency of soldiers working in certain duty positions. The GAO found that these programs, which are autonomous and highly individualized, require soldiers to take certification examinations developed by the same contractors teaching the troop school courses. The GAO concluded that current certification policies may result in unnecessary training. (The GAO noted, for example, that at some installations, failure of the examination means automatic enrollment in a course.) The GAO observed that effective internal controls are needed to assure that contractors do not use the current certification process to create a false demand for courses. The GAO found, however, that none of the installations visited had implemented review procedures or controls to ensure that the tests met Army standards or adequately measured soldier proficiency. The GAO also concluded that, aside from the impact certification testing may have on troop school enrollment, the need to contract for certification test development appears questionable in view of the Army Skill Qualification Test program, which requires that a soldier's proficiency be evaluated annually based on TRADOC tests covering critical MOS tasks. (pp. 4-5, pp. 24-28/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 3 and 17-19

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The current Army certification policies can result in an overstatement of course need and the excessive expenditure of training funds.

Now on pp. 3 and 19-20.

- FINDING F: The Army Lacks Criteria to Determine How Many Soldiers Can Cross-Train. The GAO reported that the majority of soldiers who attended troop schools it visited took courses in an MOS that differed from their primary MOS. The GAO found that, according to enrollment data, 73 percent of the soldiers in the courses it reviewed did not hold the primary MOS of the course. The GAO also observed that the Army has not established the criteria to guide commanders in deciding how much backup expertise is necessary. The GAO found that installation officials did not know how many soldiers were being cross-trained, nor could they provide an explanation for the large number enrolled for this purpose. The GAO concluded that the number of soldiers cross-trained might have been excessive (citing one installation where as many as five soldiers were cross-trained for each authorized position in one occupational specialty). (p. 5, pp. 28-29/GAO Draft Report)

  DoD RESPONSE: Concur. (See DoD responses to Recommendations 1 and 2).

Now on pp. 20-21.

- FINDING G: Installations Did Not Establish Course Entrance Qualifications. The GAO reported that Army Regulation 351-1 states that it is a major command responsibility to ensure that installations establish and enforce course entrance qualifications (used to help ensure that the best qualified soldiers are selected for training and will have sufficient opportunity to use the training). The GAO found that Army regulations do not provide guidance concerning entrance qualifications for troop school courses. The GAO concluded, therefore, that there are (1) no standard entrance qualifications, (2) wide variations from base to base, and (3) no controls to ensure soldiers selected for training are those who will benefit the most. (pp. 29-31/GAO Draft Report)

  DoD RESPONSE: Concur. Standardized enrollee qualifications need to be established for all troop school courses.

Now on pp. 4 and 21-22.

- FINDING H: Many Courses Were Not Authorized. The GAO reported that, according to the Army regulations, troop schools should not provide tactical or combat-related training or substantially duplicate training offered elsewhere by the Army. The GAO found, however, that troop schools taught tactical courses, including Basic Marksmanship and M60 Machine Gunner, as well as leadership courses, duplicating courses taught by Army personnel. The GAO further found that, in FY 1986 and FY 1987, at the two major Army commands visited, more that 35,000 soldiers attended these types of courses. (p.5, pp. 31-32/GAO Draft Report)

  DoD RESPONSE: Concur.

- FINDING I: Course Evaluations Were Inadequate. The GAO reported that Army Regulation 351-1 requires installation commanders to conduct periodic evaluations of troop school training, which is an important internal control procedure. The GAO found, however, that none of the installations the GAO visited had conducted formal evaluations. Instead, the GAO found that installations limited their evaluations to individual student course critiques and class inspections. The GAO also found that, although most troop schools administered post-course tests to measure knowledge gained by students, (1) some test instruments may not have adequately measured knowledge gained from a troop school course, and (2) test quality also varied markedly. The GAO concluded that, while such information could provide the framework for an effective evaluation, the critiques were not analyzed on an aggregate basis, nor was there any follow-up of reported problem areas. (p. 6, pp. 32-34/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 4 and 22-23.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. (See DoD response to Recommendation 3).

- FINDING J: Program Monitoring Was Minimal. The GAO observed that course monitoring and evaluation are important internal control elements. The GAO found, however, that the Army has not developed guidance on how commanders and other officials should monitor and evaluate courses. The GAO also found that installation officials essentially performed only minimal monitoring of contractor activity, with the major commands and the DCSOPS did little or no monitoring of troop schools. (p. 6, pp. 34-35/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 4 and 24.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. (See DoD response to Recommendations 2 and 3).

- FINDING K: Effective Internal Controls Lacking. The GAO found that none of the installations it visited fully complied with Army Regulation 351-1. The GAO also found that the program has become self-sustaining, justified primarily by past attendance. The GAO concluded that the necessity and effectiveness of the troop school program is unclear. The GAO further found that contracts for troop school courses were not adequately justified because specific training needs had not been determined. The GAO concluded that, as a result, the required training courses and the number of soldiers who should attend them were not determined. The GAO also concluded that, until the Army establishes effective internal controls to ensure that regulatory requirements such as needs assessments, program monitoring, and program evaluation are effectively and consistently implemented, it cannot ensure that funds for troop school courses are spent as prudently as possible. (p. 4, p. 35/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 2-3 and 24-25.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The Army lacks the internal controls needed to ensure that the troop school training program is properly administered. Internal control measures will be instituted for FY 1989, and the Army will consider including this deficiency in the FY 1988 Army Annual Assurance Statement.

o FINDING L: Course Content Is Inconsistent With Army Training Standards. The GAO reported that the Army has developed a Soldier Manual for each MOS, describing the critical job tasks the soldier needs to be proficient. The GAO observed that, while this was developed to ensure standardized training throughout the Army, the tasks taught in troop schools varied widely from base to base. The GAO found, for example, substantial variation in the length of troop school courses. The GAO also noted that, according to TRADOC officials, a soldier must be proficient in all performance elements to be able to perform tasks in accordance with Army standards. The GAO reported, however, that the TRADOC review of troop school courses showed only selected performance elements of each Soldier Manual task had been included. The GAO noted that, while TRADOC officials stated that this approach may be satisfactory for soldiers who hold the MOS of the course taught, they do not believe it meets the needs of soldiers enrolled for cross-training--who make up the majority of soldiers attending troop schools. The GAO also found that the Army training program prescribes a building-block approach for individual skill training. The GAO noted, however, that based on a TRADOC review, courses for wheel and track vehicle mechanics included skill level tasks more advanced that the skill levels of most soldiers who attended them. The GAO concluded that the Army has not established effective internal controls to ensure that troop school courses taught by contractors are consistent with Army training standards and doctrine. (p. 6, pp. 37-41/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 4 and 26-29.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. (See DoD response to Recommendation 5).

o FINDING M: Programs of Instruction Were Not Reviewed. The GAO found that installation officials relied completely on contractors to develop troop school course materials. The GAO observed that, while these materials should be reviewed to ensure their consistency with Army training standards, it did not appear that troop school officials had done so. The GAO also found that many of the POIs had not been reviewed by TRADOC schools to ensure their adherence to Army standards to the TRADOC. (A GAO review of FORSCOM records for the period September 1986 to October 1987, indicated that, for the six installations the GAO reviewed, 79 percent of the POIs had not been submitted to TRADOC.) In addition, the GAO found that, in most cases, POIs were not reviewed by either installation or TRADOC school officials. The GAO concluded that the Army lacks effective control procedures to ensure contractor-developed POIs adhere to Army training standards. The GAO also concluded that the Army needs to establish internal control procedures to ensure courses taught in troop schools

(1) are consistent with Army training standards, (2) are adequate to teach skills required by soldiers who are cross-trained, and (3) contain current doctrine. In addition, the GAO concluded that, while a review of the POIs is a first step, in the long run greater efficiency may be achieved if the Army develops standardized POIs for use in all troop schools (supplemented with local procedures, as necessary). Finally, the GAO concluded that a standardized POI could reduce contracting costs incurred for POI development, as well as help to ensure more consistent training in critical MOS tasks from base to base. (p. 3, pp. 41-42/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 2 and 29-30.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The POI's for troop school courses need to be standardized and reviewed annually by the TRADOC to ensure they are consistent with current Army doctrine.

- FINDING N: Many POIs Contained Outdated Doctrine. The GAO reported that, in their review of course POIs, TRADOC school officials identified a number of tasks containing outdated Army doctrine or procedures. The GAO cited a June 1, 1987, memorandum from the Fort Lewis Troop School Commander, which stated the following:

> "The contractor's response to compliance with the contract, for updated POIs has been unacceptable. The material as presented does not reflect current Army doctrine nor does it resemble what is being taught in current School Command courses. Lack of compliance to Army training doctrine is so blatant that a course by course material survey could be both wasteful of time and expense. The contractor simply has not kept the POIs current for two or three years." (p. 3, pp. 42-44/GAO Draft Report)

Now on pp. 2 and 30-31.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. (See DoD response to Recommendation 5).

* * * * * * * * *

RECOMMENDATIONS

- RECOMMENDATION 1: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army develop guidance on factors that commanders should consider, including alternative training sources, in conducting needs assessments. (p. 35/GAO Draft Report)

Now on p. 25.

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The Army will develop guidance on the conduct of needs assessments to be instituted in the administration of all troop schools in FY 1989. This guidance will require commanders to consider alternative training sources prior to specifying the need for troop school training.

Now on p. 25.

- RECOMMENDATION 2: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army develop standardized criteria for commanders to use to (1) determine the number of soldiers who should be cross-trained to provide adequate backup expertise, (2) establish entrance qualifications for enrollment in troop school courses, and (3) evaluate program effectiveness. (pp. 35-36/GAO Draft Report)

  DoD RESPONSE: Concur. Existing Army regulations will be revised, for use in FY 1989, to establish enrollee entrance qualifications and procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of troop school programs. Guidance will also be provided on the factors to be considered in determining troop school cross-training requirements.

Now on p. 25.

- RECOMMENDATION 3: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army develop and implement internal control procedures to ensure that adequate needs assessments are conducted before installations contract for training and that troop school programs are properly monitored and evaluated. (p. 36/GAO Draft Report)

  DoD RESPONSE: Concur. Internal control measures will be instituted to ensure that needs assessments are accurate and that the total program is monitored for effective training. These initiatives will be implemented in FY 1989.

Now on p. 25.

- RECOMMENDATION 4: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army (1) determine whether soldier certification tests should be continued in view of the Skill Qualification Test program in place throughout the Army and (2) if certification is found to be necessary, develop standardized tests for use in all troop school programs. (p. 36/GAO Draft Report)

  DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The Army will evaluate the need to continue soldier certification testing in troop school programs. If such testing is determined to be appropriate, standardized tests will be developed by TRADOC for implementation in FY 1989.

Now on p. 31.

- RECOMMENDATION 5: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army ensure that the POIs currently used in troop schools are reviewed and approved by TRADOC schools. (p. 44/GAO Draft Report)

  DoD RESPONSE: Concur. The TRADOC will review current troop school POIs and make the revisions needed to comply with current Army doctrine. The review is expected to be completed in FY 1989.

Now on p. 31.

o RECOMMENDATION 6: The GAO recommended that the Secretary of the Army direct the TRADOC to develop standardized POIs, as new requirements for troop school courses are identified. (p. 44/GAO Draft Report)

DoD RESPONSE: Concur. Existing Army regulations will be revised, for use in FY 1989, to ensure that standardized POIs are developed for new troop school courses.

-9-

Requests for copies of GAO reports should be sent to:

U.S. General Accounting Office
Post Office Box 6015
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877

Telephone 202-275-6241

The first five copies of each report are free. Additional copies are $2.00 each.

There is a 25% discount on orders for 100 or more copies mailed to a single address.

Orders must be prepaid by cash or by check or money order made out to the Superintendent of Documents.